

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the originally filed drawing sheet containing Fig. 1 with the replacement drawing sheet also containing Fig. 1, found in the Appendix attached hereto. The undersigned attorney states that no new matter has been added either by addition and/or deletion. Accordingly, acceptance of the one (1) replacement sheet of drawing containing Fig. 1 is respectfully requested.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated June 10, 2010.

By the present amendment, the independent claims have been amended to clarify the invention, as will be discussed below. Further, a minor informality in Fig. 1 has been corrected.

Briefly, the present invention is directed to an improved system and method for supporting a domestic treated water transaction. Specifically, referring to Fig. 1 (solely for purposes of example), an overall picture of a transaction cycle to which the present invention is directed is shown. In particular, as discussed in the 'Background of the Invention,' the present invention is directed to providing an improved system and method for utilizing ballast tanks of tankers, such as typically used to transport crude oil from oil producing countries, as a practical and efficient system to provide domestic treated water to such oil producing countries for use, for example, in irrigating farmlands.

As discussed, for example, in paragraph [0008] of the published application U.S. Pub. 2007/0255573 for the present application, many crude oil producing countries lie in areas of very arid climate, and, as such, have great use for domestic treated water of other countries (typically oil demanding countries). Since large tankers require ballast water for proper operation, the present invention is directed to providing an efficient system and method for utilizing the ballast tanks of such tankers, separate from the oil carrying tanks, as noted in paragraph [0036] for a practical purpose. Further, by using domestic treated water from the oil demanding countries, the problem of discharging polluting ballast water in the port areas of the

oil producing countries (which has, in the past raised many environmental issues, as discussed in paragraphs [0003] et seq) is avoided.

Paragraph [0003] through [0039] describes the overall general operation for the transfer of domestic treated water in the ballast tanks of a tanker from a domestic treated water supplying country 1 to a domestic treated water demanding country 2, followed by the return of the vessel with a cargo product, such as crude oil in the example which is given. As such, the present invention is specifically directed to an arrangement to facilitate the use of ballast tanks, separate from the typical cargo tanks, of a vessel to supply the domestic treated water to a country which demands it, and to which the tanker is traveling anyway, while overcoming the environmental issues which have existed in the past.

Referring next to Figures 2 and 3, these provide an overall view of a system which is provided by the present invention to facilitate this transfer of domestic treated water in a ballast tank of a vessel which has, as its main purpose, the transport of some cargo other than domestic treated water in tanks which are separate from the ballast tanks. Referring first to Fig. 2, an overall view of the system is shown which links a suppliers terminal 6, a demanders terminal 7 and a ship owners terminal 5 to a domestic treated water (DTW) transaction supporting server 4. As such, the present invention is particularly directed to evaluating the needs of all three users (that is, the suppliers, the demanders and the ship owners) by utilizing the DTW transaction supporting server 4.

Turning next to Fig. 3, a detailed view of the DTW transaction supporting server 4 is shown. As can be seen in Fig. 3, the server includes databases for user information (408), supplier information (409), demand information (410), matching information (411) and transport offer information (412). In addition, the server

includes control means 401, matching means 402, register means 403, display creation means 404, correction means 405 and communication means 406. In short, the DTW server 4 provides all the information and control means for providing the best possible match between the supplier's capabilities, the demander's needs and the ship owner's capability.

Reconsideration and removal of the 35 USC §103 rejection of claims 1-14 based on Tanaka (JP 2002-215731) in view of Kluss (USP 6,463,419) is respectfully requested. As will be discussed in more detail below, by the present amendment, each of the independent claims 1, 4 and 5 has been amended to more clearly define the features of the invention, and particularly the features of:

- (1) the use of at least one ballast tank of the vessel, separate from a cargo carrying tank of the vessel, for transporting the domestic treated water; and
- (2) the correcting of the demand information and the supply information on the basis of a maximum transport water quantity of the domestic treated water that the vessel can transport in the at least one ballast tank.

More specifically, each of the independent claims 1, 4, and 5 defines the features of the present invention for facilitating the transfer of domestic treated water as ballast water in at least one ballast tank of a vessel, separate from the cargo carrying tank of the vessel (as noted, for example, in paragraph [0036]). In particular, each of the independent claims 1, 4 and 5 defines the arrangements for storing the demand information and the supply information, making a match regarding the demand and supply information, creating a display in the form of a matching information list, and, as previously defined in claim 3, providing an arrangement for correcting the demand information and the supply information on the basis of a maximum transport water quantity of domestic treated water that the

vessel can transport in the at least one ballast tank. It is respectfully submitted that neither of the cited references to Tanaka nor Kluss teach or suggest these features.

As apparently recognized by the Examiner, the Tanaka reference is simply a general teaching of providing an arrangement for the distribution of recycled water, without any specific details pertaining to the claimed invention for how to do this. In particular, Tanaka completely lacks any suggestion whatsoever of distributing the recycled water in a ballast tank of a ship which has tanks for completely different cargo transporting purposes. Therefore, taking claim 1 as an example, the primary reference to Tanaka completely lacks all of the claimed features of the storing means, matching means, register means, display creation means, communication means and correction means.

In the Office Action, the apparently recognized shortcomings of Tanaka are attempted to be overcome by the use of the secondary reference to Kluss. Kluss is of general interest with regard to its teachings of a ship chartering system. However, once again, Kluss provides no suggestion whatsoever of using a ballast tank of a ship to transport recycled water, separate from the transport of some other cargo, such as oil, in tanks separate from the ballast tanks or the coordination of the needs and capabilities of the suppliers, the demanders and the ship owners.

As noted above, each of the independent claims 1, 4 and 5 has been amended to bring in a portion of claim 3 directed to the correcting means for correcting the demand and supply information on the basis of a maximum transport water quantity of domestic treated water that the vessel can transport in its ballast tank. On page 6 of the Office Action, reference is made to columns 17 and 18 and column 21 regarding the claimed correction means. In particular, reference is made to column 21 for the mention of a ballast water quantity in the charterer requirement

information. However, again, there is absolutely no mention in column 21 of Kluss, or anywhere else for that matter, of using the ballast tanks to actually support a saleable product, that is, domestic treated water, separate from the transport tanks used, for example, for oil, as defined by the present claims. The general mention of ballast water in column 21 of Kluss simply pertains to proper operation of the ship concerning ballast requirements, not to utilizing the ballast tank to transport domestic treated water, separate from the tanks used for other cargo purposes. Therefore, Kluss adds nothing to suggest the claimed correction arrangements relative to the supply and demand for the domestic treated water. To put this another way, Kluss's general mention of ballast water has nothing to do with supply and demand information concerning domestic treated water.

In addition to the above points, applicants note that, in the Office Action, page 4 states:

"It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Tanaka and Kluss. Both are based on the use of a ship."

Regarding this, applicants respectfully note that Tanaka does not deal with a ship. Quite to the contrary, as can be appreciated, for example, from Fig. 10, Tanaka is only directed to an arrangement for transporting water through distribution pipings, not to any arrangements involving ships. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the basis used in the Office Action for combining Tanaka and Kluss that "both are based on the use of a ship" is not correct, and reconsideration and removal of the rejection based upon the combination of these documents is respectfully requested for this reason as well.

In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments to the independent claims 1, 4 and 5 emphasize the use of the present claimed invention

for effectively utilizing ballast tanks, separate from cargo tanks, to transfer domestic treated water, to particularly meet the needs and capabilities of three diverse parties, that is, the suppliers, the demanders and the ship owners. Neither Tanaka nor Kluss are directed to such arrangements. In particular, neither Tanaka nor Kluss are directed to using the ships separate ballast tanks for the transfer of saleable domestic treated water, quite separate from the usual cargo carrying tanks while efficiently coordinating the suppliers, the demanders and the ship owners. Therefore, based on these amendments, reconsideration and allowance of the amended independent claims 1, 4 and 5 is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and allowance of the dependent claims is also respectfully requested. In each case, these claims define further specific features which, when considered with the features of their parent claims, serve to define overall combinations neither taught nor suggested by the cited prior art.

More specifically, particular reconsideration is requested concerning dependent claims 3 and 9. Taking claim 3 as an example (noting that claim 9 provides corresponding method language), this claim very clearly defines the interrelationship between the communication means, the display creation means, and the correction means, the features of which are clearly completely lacking from both of the cited references since, as noted above, these documents do not pertain to the specific features of the present invention for using ballast tanks of vessels to transport domestic treated water, with all of the problems attendant thereto. With regard to this, claim 3 specifically defines the following roles for each of these three means, that is, the communication means, the display creation means and the correction means:

- (1) with regard to the communication means, the claim defines that, through this communication means "there are received selection information that indicates which piece of said matching information is selected in said matching information list screen and transport offer information which includes information on said transport water quantity and sale price obtained by adding a desired fee to said supply price."
- (2) with regard to the display creation means, claim 3 defines that this means "creates and sends a transport offer screen on which a list of said transport offer information is displayed through said communication means, and wherein when offer selection information that indicates which piece of said transport offer information is selected in said transport offer screen is received."
- (3) in conjunction with this, claim 3 defines that the correction means, on the basis of the offer selection information, "registers in a supply information database, a result of subtracting said transport water quantity from a purchase water quantity in a piece of said demand information in which a transaction has been determined and registers, in said supply information database, a result of subtracting said transport water quantity from a supply water quantity in a piece of said supply information that is matched with said piece of said demand information for which said transaction has been determined."

In other words, the dependent claims 3 and 9 very specifically define an interrelationship between the communication means, the display creation means and the correction means which is completely lacking from either of the cited references, particularly since the respective parent claims 1 and 5 have been amended to clarify the use of the present invention for facilitating the transport and sale of domestic treated water as ballast water in a ballast tank of a vessel, separate from the cargo carrying tank of the vessel.

Incidentally, it is noted that the Office Action states, on page 2, that the Tanaka reference is "JP 2002-215731A", followed by the term "(Derwent 2003-460472)." It is applicants understanding that the reference to Derwent is simply an identifier for the location of the Abstract regarding the Tanaka document. If this is

not correct, it is respectfully requested that clarification be provided in a new Office Action as to the intended use of the term regarding "Derwent."

If the Examiner believes that there are any other points which may be clarified or otherwise disposed of either by telephone discussion or by personal interview, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Docket No. 513.46526X00), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Appendix